



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
BEAUMONT DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	§	
	§	
v.	§	CASE NO. 1:05-CR-4(1)
	§	
MARIO RUBEN COLUNGA	§	

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATION ON PLEA OF TRUE
BEFORE THE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b) and the Local Rules for the District Court, Eastern District of Texas, the District Court referred this matter for hearing and the submission of findings of fact and a report and recommendation pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §§ 3401(I) and 3583(e). The United States alleges that Defendant, Mario Ruben Colunga, violated conditions of supervised release imposed by United States District Judge Ron Clark of the Eastern District of Texas. The United States Probation Office filed its *Petition for Warrant or Summons for Offender Under Supervision* requesting the revocation of Defendant's supervised release [Clerk's doc. #36]. The Court conducted a hearing on April 14, 2009, in accordance with Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure 11, 32 and 32.1. Defendant was present and represented by counsel at the hearing. Having heard the evidence, this court factually finds that Defendant has violated conditions of supervision and recommends that such violation warrants the revocation of his supervised release.

After conducting the proceeding in the form and manner prescribed by Federal Rule of

Criminal Procedure¹¹, the Court finds:

a. That Defendant, after consultation with counsel of record, has knowingly, freely and voluntarily consented to the administration of the plea of true in this cause by a United States Magistrate Judge subject to a final approval and imposition of sentence by the District Court.

b. That Defendant is fully competent and capable of entering an informed plea, that Defendant is aware of the nature of the charges and the consequences of the plea, that his plea of true is a knowing and voluntary plea, not the result of force or threats, and that the plea is supported by an independent evidentiary basis in fact establishing each of the essential elements of the conduct.

STATEMENT OF REASONS

A. Procedural History

On July 26, 2005, The Honorable Ron Clark, United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas, sentenced Mario Ruben Colunga after he pled guilty to the offenses of bank robbery, a Class C felony. Judge Clark sentenced Defendant to 38 months imprisonment, followed by three (3) years supervised release subject to the standard conditions of release, plus special conditions to include financial disclosure; drug aftercare; mental health treatment; and a \$100 special assessment. On October 19, 2007, Mario Ruben Colunga completed his period of imprisonment and began service of the supervision term.

On November 29, 2007, the Court modified Mr. Colunga's term of supervision to include inpatient drug treatment. On March 5, 2009, his conditions were again modified by the Court to include relapse inpatient drug treatment directly followed with 180 days placement in a Community Corrections Facility.

B. Allegations in Petition

The United States alleges that Defendant violated the following mandatory condition of his supervised release:

The defendant shall refrain from any unlawful use of a controlled substance. The defendant shall submit to one drug test within 15 days of release from imprisonment or placement on probation and at least two periodic drug tests thereafter, as directed by the probation officer.

On March 16, 2009, Mr. Colunga submitted a urine specimen at the U.S. Probation Office which tested positive for amphetamine/methamphetamine. He signed an admission indicating that he used ICE on or about March 14, 2009.

C. Evidence presented at Hearing:

At the hearing, the Government offered the following evidence as its factual basis for the allegations set out *supra*. The Government would offer, in exhibit form, documents establishing that Mr. Colunga submitted a urine specimen on March 16, 2009, which yielded a positive result for amphetamine/methamphetamine. The Government also presented, as an exhibit, the signed admission from Mr. Colunga in which he admits to using ICE, a form of methamphetamine, on March 14, 2009. That document is entitled “Response to Allegation of Violation(s) of Conditions of Supervision” and is signed by both Mr. Colunga and his probation officer.

Defendant, Mario Ruben Colunga, offered a plea of true to the allegations. Specifically, Mr. Colunga agreed with the evidence presented and pled true to the allegation that he violated his supervision conditions by using a controlled substance, specifically methamphetamine

D. Sentencing Guidelines; Findings and Recommended Disposition

The allegations, supporting evidence and plea of true warrant revocation of supervised release. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3583(e)(3). The Court factually finds by a preponderance of the evidence that Defendant violated a mandatory condition of his supervised release by using a controlled substance. This conduct constitutes a Grade C violation under U.S.S.G. § 7B1.1(a). Upon finding a Grade C violation, the Court may revoke Defendant's supervised release. *See* U.S.S.G. § 7B1.3(a)(2); 18 U.S.C. § 3583.

Based upon Mr. Colunga's criminal history category of III and the Grade C violation, the Sentencing Guidelines suggest a sentence of imprisonment for a period ranging from five (5) to eleven (11) months. *See* U.S.S.G. § 7B1.4(a). Because the original offense of conviction was a Class C felony, the statutory maximum imprisonment term upon revocation is two (2) years. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3583(e)(3).

If the Court revokes a defendant's term of supervision and orders the defendant to serve a term of imprisonment for that revocation, the Court may also require that the defendant be placed on a new term of supervised release. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3583(h). The length of this term of supervised release shall not exceed the term of supervised release authorized by statute for the offense which resulted in the original term of supervised release, less any term of imprisonment that was imposed upon revocation of supervised release. *Id.* Because Mr. Colunga's original offense was a Class C felony, the maximum term of supervised release in this proceeding is not more than three years, or thirty-six (36) months. 18 U.S.C. § 3583(b)(2); 3583(h). *See also* U.S.S.G. § 7B1.3(g)(2).

The Fifth Circuit states that Chapter 7 of the Sentencing Guidelines regarding the revocation

of supervised release is advisory only. *See United States v. Cade*, 279 F.3d 265, 271 n.2 (5th Cir. 2002) (citing *United States v. Montez*, 952 F.2d 854, 859 (5th Cir. 1992); *United States v. Headrick*, 963 F.2d 777, 782 (5th Cir. 1992)). Because Chapter 7 was promulgated as an advisory policy statement and there are no applicable guidelines for sentencing after revocation of supervised release¹, the Court may impose a greater or lesser sentence upon revocation. *United States v. Gonzalez*, 250 F.3d 923, 925 (5th Cir. 2001). Further, a sentence imposed for revocation will be upheld unless it is in violation of the law or plainly unreasonable. *Id.* *See also United States v. Pena*, 125 F.3d 285, 288 (5th Cir. 1997)(Citations omitted).

Here, the evidence and Defendant's own admission supports a finding that he violated his supervision conditions. Mr. Colunga voluntarily pled true and agreed with the Court's recommended sentence for that violation. *See Consent to Revocation of Supervised Release and Waiver of Right to Be Present and Speak at Sentencing.*

Accordingly, based upon Defendant's plea of true, the agreement of the parties, and the evidence presented in this case, it is the recommendation of the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge that the District Court accept the plea of true and revoke Defendant's supervised release. The undersigned magistrate further recommends that the District Court order Defendant to serve a term of **five (5) months imprisonment**, with credit for time already spent in federal custody on this matter.

The Court further recommends that, upon his release from prison, Mr. Colunga should be sentenced to a new term of **supervised release for a term of twenty-four (24) months**. Pursuant

¹ *See U.S. Sentencing Guidelines Manual*, Ch. 7, pt. A, cmt. 1 ("At this time, the Commission has chosen to promulgate policy statements only.")

to the recommendation of the Probation Office and the agreement of the parties, the new term of supervision should be subject to the following mandatory, standard and special conditions:

“Within 72 hours of release from the custody of the Bureau of Prisons, the defendant shall report in person to the probation office in the district to which the defendant is released.

While on supervised release, the defendant shall not commit another federal, state, or local crime, and shall comply with the standard conditions that have been adopted by the Court, and shall comply with the following additional conditions:

The defendant shall provide the probation officer with access to any requested financial information for purposes of monitoring employment.

The defendant shall participate in a program of testing and treatment for alcohol abuse, under the guidance and direction of the U.S. Probation Office, until such time as the defendant is released from the program by the probation officer.

Under the guidance and direction of the U.S. Probation Office, the defendant shall participate in any combination of psychiatric, psychological, or mental health treatment as deemed appropriate by the treatment provider.

The defendant shall not illegally possess a controlled substance, and shall refrain from any unlawful use of a controlled substance.

The defendant shall be required to submit to a drug test within 15 days of release on supervised release, and at least two periodic drug tests thereafter, as directed by the probation officer.

The defendant shall participate in a program of testing and treatment for drug abuse, under

the guidance and direction of the U.S. Probation Office, until such time as the defendant is released from the program from the probation officer.”

OBJECTIONS

Within ten (10) days after receipt of this report, any party may serve and file written objections to the report and recommendation of the Magistrate Judge pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(c). Failure to file written objections to the proposed findings of facts, conclusions of law and recommendations contained within this report within ten (10) days after service shall bar an aggrieved party from *de novo* review by the District Judge of the proposed findings, conclusions and recommendations, and from appellate review of factual findings and legal conclusions accepted by the District Court except on grounds of plain error. *Douglass v. United Serv. Auto. Ass’n*, 79 F.3d 1415 (5th Cir. 1996) (*en banc*); 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). The constitutional safeguards afforded by Congress and the courts require that, when a party takes advantage of his right to object to a magistrate’s findings or recommendation, a district judge must exercise its nondelegable authority by considering the actual evidence and not merely by reviewing and blindly adopting the magistrate’s report and recommendation. *See Hernandez v. Estelle*, 711 F.2d 619, 620 (5th Cir. 1983); *United States v. Elsoffer*, 644 F.2d 357, 359 (5th Cir. 1981) (*per curiam*).

SIGNED this the 16th day of April, 2009.



KEITH F. GIBLIN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE